

Subregion: EAST, SOUTH **Counties:** INYO, KERN

Applicant: INYO NATIONAL FOREST

Project Title: KERN PLATEAU STREAM AND RIPARIAN RESTORATION

Reference Number: SNC 070294

This restoration project consists of repairing existing erosion control structures, installing new grade stabilizing and erosion control structures, and conducting treatment effectiveness monitoring on streams in the Kern Plateau. Three of the six projects are located along tributaries of the Kern River and three are located in the Cottonwood Creek watershed which flows to the Owens River. This project will directly benefit water quality, stream channel stabilization, meadow hydrologic function, and aquatic and riparian habitat. This restoration project is part of a larger project with the Inyo National Forest, Patagonia, and the San Diego Flyfishers organization and has matching funds from these organizations totaling \$42,600.

- Completing site designs for two Monache Meadows projects;
- Installing new erosion control structures and maintaining and repairing existing structures in Monache Meadows;
- Completing four site designs for projects in Round Mountain/Horseshoe Meadow, Dutch Meadow, Ash Meadow, and Bullfrog Meadow;
- Installing new erosion control structures and maintaining and repairing existing structures in these four meadows;
- Monitoring stream stabilization work and making necessary repairs;
- Establish photo-points at the project sites and maintain a record of pre and post project photos;
- Provide progress reports to the Conservancy every six months for the project duration and a final performance report on the project once completed.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

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existing structures in these four meadows	2009
Complete and submit eighteen-month progress report to SNC	October 2009
Monitor erosion control stabilization work and make necessary repairs	November 2009 – April 2010
Take post-restoration photographs for inclusion in final report	April 2010
Final Report/Final Payment Request	May 2010

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Crew leader and Hand Crew	\$73,500
Monitoring	2,500
Pack Stock rental for Wilderness trips	9,300
Administrative fees	6,000
GRAND TOTAL	\$91,300

Letters of Support:

None submitted.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the authorization of this grant for the requested \$91,300.

Project Name: Kern Plateau Stream and Riparian Restoration**2. Project Summary**

This project consists of repairing existing headcut structures, and placing new grade stabilizing and headcut structures and conducting treatment effectiveness monitoring on streams on the Kern Plateau. Three of the 6 project sites are on tributaries of the Kern River and three are in the Cottonwood Creek watershed, which is in the Owens River.

In 2004, the Inyo National Forest, the California Department of Fish and Game and the US Fish and Wildlife Service developed the "Conservation Assessment and Strategy for the California Golden Trout" (Strategy). This spurred the creation of a successful public-private partnership - The Golden Trout Project (www.Californiagoldentrout.org). Participants have included California Trout, Trout Unlimited, Agua Bonita Flyfishers, various retailers and other groups. The goal is restoring habitat and distribution of the California Golden Trout. This project would compliment these efforts.

Much of the project area is a working landscape. Commercial livestock has been a historic activity and continues today. However, many challenges and conflicts exist between uses that require management and collaboration to overcome. Historic and current uses include public stock use, commercial stock use, livestock grazing, hunting, fishing, backpacking (including Pacific Crest Trail hikers) and Off-highway Vehicle use (outside wilderness).

A portion of this project would be within the headwaters of the South Fork Kern River and Golden Trout Creek, which provide the last remaining habitat for the California Golden Trout (a decision to list or not to list under the Endangered Species Act is pending). In addition, Mountain Yellow Legged Frog (MYLF), a Forest Service Sensitive Species, is found in this project area. These watersheds also provide water for downstream users including Lake Isabella, the Lower Central Valley, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, and Owens Valley residents.

Restoration Work would include: 1) Repair and maintain failing headcut and grade stabilizing structures in Olivas, Casa Vieja, Horseshoe, Dutch, and Ash Meadows. 2) Install new structures in Casa Vieja, Olivas, Bullfrog, and Kingfisher Stringer Meadows. 4) Perform headcut and grade stabilization effectiveness monitoring.

Other watershed/fisheries improvement projects in these watersheds are funded by other sources. The Forest received a \$200,000 OHV restoration and conservation grant from the State of California to improve water quality and recreation experience (to be used 2007-2009). We expect \$90,000 in-kind volunteer and DFG participation in these efforts from 2008 to 2011. Patagonia is donating approximately \$17,000 to The Golden Trout Project to continue restoration outlined in the Strategy. The above projects would have cumulative benefits with this project.

There would also be direct matches for this project. Of the \$17,000 donated by Patagonia, \$5,000 would be used for this project. The San Diego Fly Fishers would contribute about \$1,600 in cash, plus volunteer labor, and the Forest Service would contribute about \$36,000.

The total grant being requested is \$91,500, with a total project cost of \$133,900.